

# ROMANS

11:1-12



*God Responds  
to Israel!*

# ROMANS

## 11:1-12



St. Paul clearly shows that he is now moving into a new section; however, his arguments will be connected to the preceding chapter, specifically 10:16-21. Paul will also continue his use of the OT as replies to his questions. Here is the pattern:

### Question

### OT Scripture

11:1a

11:2a (1Sam 12:22/Ps 94:14)

11:2b

11:3 (1Kings 19:10, 14)

11:4a

11:4b (1Kings 19:18)

11:7a

11:8-10 (Dt. 29:4; Is 29:10; Ps 69:22, 23)

11:11

Introduction

# ROMANS

11:1-12



**Introduction**

**St. Paul will continue his use of the “full” Hebrew Bible as he will choose his OT responses quite broadly in order to represent the whole of Scripture, as shown above. So, he will use the Torah, the Prophets (of note, the Books of Samuel and Kings are considered prophetic and are included among the Prophets); and the Psalms (which is chief among the Writings). As Paul begins this chapter, and throughout the rest of the Book of Romans, he will be honing in on the character of God!**

# ROMANS

11:1-4



**Part I: An  
Abhorrent  
Thought  
Rejected**

***<sup>1</sup>I ask then: Did God not reject His people? Never may it be! For I am also an Israelite, from out of [the] seed of Abraham, of [the] tribe of Benjamin. <sup>2</sup>God did not reject His people, whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel: <sup>3</sup>“Lord, they have killed Your prophets; Your altars they have torn down; and I have been left alone, and they are seeking my life.” <sup>4</sup>But what [was] the Divine answer spoken to him? “I have left to Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed [the] knee to Baal.”***

# ROMANS

## 11:1-2a



God Did Not  
Push Away  
His People

***<sup>1</sup>I ask then: Did God not reject His people? Never may it be! For I am also an Israelite, from out of [the] seed of Abraham, of [the] tribe of Benjamin. <sup>2</sup> God did not reject His people, whom He foreknew.***

Last week, Paul ended chapter 10 by speaking directly about Israel (cf. 10:21). In this verse, he characterizes them as being ***“an unpersuaded and contradicting people.”*** So, this leads to a question: ***“How will God react to a people who responds to Him in this way?”*** This will be the focus at the beginning of Chapter 11 as Paul writes, ***<sup>1</sup>I ask then: Did God not reject His people? Never may it be!*** Once again, back to 10:21, and we see that God did not reject or “push away” His people and the first half of verse 21 makes that quite clear.

# ROMANS

11:1-2a



God Did Not  
Push Away  
His People

***<sup>1</sup>I ask then: Did God not reject His people? Never may it be! For I am also an Israelite, from out of [the] seed of Abraham, of [the] tribe of Benjamin. <sup>2</sup> God did not reject His people, whom He foreknew.***

The Greek noun that Paul uses for **“people”** doesn’t have an ethic meaning, but rather, a theological meaning. **“People”** [λαός] denotes a people who have been chosen and, therefore, they have a special and privileged religious position. Israel was chosen by God to serve Him and in their service to Him, He will redeem them (cf. 1 Chr 17:21).

# ROMANS

## 11:1-2a



God Did Not  
Push Away  
His People

*<sup>1</sup>I ask then: Did God not reject His people? **Never may it be!** For I am also an Israelite, from out of [the] seed of Abraham, of [the] tribe of Benjamin. <sup>2</sup> God did not reject His people, whom He foreknew.*

Paul negates the possibility of God pushing away His people by an emphatic statement: **“Never may it be!”** Paul just doesn’t let his reply stand alone. He provides three pieces of evidence to prove that God has not push away His people:

- (1) Paul’s Jewish remnant perspective in 1b;
- (2) the Scripture citation in 2a; and,
- (3) his recounting of Elijah in 2b-4.

Let’s take a brief look at all three.

# ROMANS

## 11:1-2a



Paul's Jewish  
Perspective  
(1b)

*<sup>1b</sup>For I am also an Israelite, from out of [the] seed of Abraham, of [the] tribe of Benjamin.*

Paul's first piece of evidence is his own ethnicity. He is living proof that God has not pushed away His people, Israel. This is what Luther writes concerning Paul's assertion: *"For if God had rejected His own people, He surely would have rejected the apostle Paul, who with all his strength had contended against God"*<sup>1</sup> In essence, Luther is saying that if God had not permanently rejected even a blasphemous persecutor of His own Son, He surely had not cast off Israel as a whole.

<sup>1</sup>Luther, *Lectures on Romans*, AE 25:241.



# ROMANS

## 11:1-2a



***1b**For I am also an Israelite, from out of [the] seed of Abraham, of [the] tribe of Benjamin.*

Note that St. Paul places himself within the line of promises given to Abraham and his offspring as we have previously discussed in 4:13-18 and 9:7-8.

Paul even mentions his tribe, Benjamin, as he also does in Phil 3:5, which give further credibility to his lineage.

*Paul's Jewish Perspective  
(1b)*

# ROMANS

## 11:1-2a



***2a** God did not reject His people, whom He foreknew.*

Paul uses a direct quote from 1 Samuel 12:22 and Psalm 94:14, even though he does not explicitly state these verses. In both OT texts, the personal name of God is cited, though, as was the Hebrew customs, God's name is replaced with "LORD." Yet, Paul does not use God's personal name, YHWH, but instead wrote "God," perhaps due to his preference of reserving "Lord" for Jesus.

***Scripture  
Citation (2a)***

# ROMANS

## 11:1-2a



<sup>2a</sup>God **did not reject** His people, whom He **foreknew**.

Importantly, Paul changes the verb **“did not reject”** to an aorist (past tense) middle voice (**ἀπώσατο**) from the Septuagint’s future tense (**ἀπώσεται**). This clearly show that in the middle voice (to shove); to push off, figuratively, to reject -- cast away, put away (from), thrust away (from) did not occur!

And, lastly, Paul’s use of **“foreknew,”** which we have outlined in 8:29, reaffirms that God’s eternal foreknowledge transcends all time and that He chose Israel apart from any quality or works performed by Israel!

**Scripture  
Citation (2a)**

# ROMANS

## 11:2b-4



### *Paul's Recounting of Elijah (2b-4)*

*<sup>2b</sup>Or do you not know what the Scripture says in Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel: <sup>3</sup>“Lord, they have killed Your prophets; Your altars they have torn down; and I have been left alone, and they are seeking my life.” <sup>4</sup>But what [was] the Divine answer spoken to him? “I have left to Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed [the] knee to Baal.”*

Paul's final argument that *“God did not push his people away”* is from Israel's history. Paul's introduction clearly presumes that his audience knows the passage and its context. Elijah's complaint is found in 1 Kings 19:10 and is repeated in v.14. The only difference is that Paul adds a vocative *“Lord,”* which represents the Hebrew name YHWH.

# ROMANS

## 11:2b-4



### Paul's Recounting of Elijah (2b-4)

<sup>2b</sup>Or do you not know what the Scripture says in Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel: <sup>3</sup>“Lord, they have killed Your prophets; Your altars they have torn down; and I have been left alone, and they are seeking my life.” <sup>4</sup>**But what [was] the Divine answer spoken to him?** “I have left to Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed [the] knee to Baal.”

In v.4, Paul introduces God’s response: <sup>4</sup>**But what [was] the Divine answer spoken to him?** The Greek noun for **“Divine answer”** is the only time it is used in Holy Scripture, though there are uses of it non-canonical Hebrew writings (e.g., 2 Maccabees). The key matter of this verse is the vocabulary that is related to the Greek noun **“remnant”** that will be discussed in v.5. The full meaning of this word Paul uses to clearly show how God relates to His people, Israel, even when they are wayward, **“an unpersuaded and contradicting people.”**

# ROMANS

11:5-6



**A Remnant  
by God's  
Choice**

**<sup>5</sup>So then also, in the present time, there has been a remnant according to [the] Divine choice of grace.**

**<sup>6</sup>Now if by grace, no longer from works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.**

St. Paul now turns to the present and draws his conclusion. He signals his emphasis by beginning with, ***“So then also...”*** and this tripling of connectives is found only here in Paul’s writings, which is used to underscore the great importance of what Paul is about to argue. Even ***“in the present time,”*** God has not pushed His people away; He has not completely rejected them. He continues to stretch out His hands toward them (10:21). Because of God’s grace, a ***“remnant according to [the] Divine choice of grace”*** does remain. It is surprising that the Greek noun that Paul uses for **“remnant”** (λείμμα) is only found here in the NT.

# ROMANS

11:5-6



*A Remnant  
by God's  
Choice*

<sup>5</sup>So then also, in the present time, there has been a **remnant according to [the] Divine choice of grace**. <sup>6</sup>Now if by grace, no longer from works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.

This **“remnant”** leads Paul to make a number of profound theological statements. It’s **“according to [the] Divine choice of grace.”** St. Paul uses the two major nouns of **“choice”** and **“grace”** repeatedly in Romans. His point is very clear: God’s **“choice”** was purely a matter **“of grace!”**

We must affirm, as does Paul, that by God’s grace, He chose Israel as His treasured people. He chose the whole people to be His own, all of Israel, not just some of them (e.g., Dt. 4:37; 7:6-8; 10:15). Though, we should remember and acknowledge the present reality of two groups:

# ROMANS

## 11:5-6



### A Remnant by God's Choice

<sup>5</sup>So then also, in the present time, there has been a **remnant** according to [the] Divine choice of grace. <sup>6</sup>Now if by grace, no longer from works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.

- (1) a **'remnant'** enjoying the blessings of salvation and existing by virtue of God's grace (the children of Abraham); and
- (2) the *"rest!"* The *"rest"* we will address next week in v.7. Thus, the *"remnant"* and the *"rest"*, amid the widespread apostasy of Israel, aren't new to the NT era.



# ROMANS

11:5-6



*A Remnant  
by God's  
Choice*

<sup>5</sup>So then also, in the present time, there has been a **remnant** according to [the] Divine choice **of grace**. <sup>6</sup>Now if by grace, no longer from works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.

The last profound theological statement is: **“of grace.”** The Word of God, that is, Jesus Christ, the Messiah, has always been the specific means of grace for all. In review of 10:6-8, Paul tells us that this was even the case at the time of Moses! It remains true today! Therefore, the **“remnant”** now includes the company of Jews who do believe in Christ Jesus and this is so by God’s gracious choice!

# ROMANS

## 11:5-6



**A Remnant  
by God's  
Choice**

<sup>6</sup>Now if **by grace**, no longer from works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.

So then, this question is posed: **What was not involved in God's gracious choice?** Paul gives us the answer in a very diagnostic way: *"...no longer from works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace."* The remnant exists **"by grace"**, those in Israel attempting to gain God's favor *"from works"* exclude themselves from grace (e.g., 9:32, and we will also discuss in 11:7). In this verse and in 9:32, *"from works"* is short for *"from works of the Law."* Therefore, Paul is making it clear that Israel's so called 'intrinsic merit' or her 'achievement in obeying the Law' are absolutely excluded.

# ROMANS

11:1-6



**In closing, whenever and wherever a faithful remnant exists, it is only and wholly due to God's gracious action! Paul has already stated and has made abundantly clear, God intends for His grace to encompass not only Israel but all people. Conversely, the route "*from works of the Law*" are excluded for all!**

***Conclusion***

*Next Week!*



*Part II: An Analysis and  
Scriptural Support (7-10)  
and*

*Part III: What Happens  
Next? (11-12)*

*Romans 11:  
7-12*

Y

O

U

R

